

Laugh Out Loud Series for Kids

by Denise Marchetti, Children's Librarian, Wyckoff Public Library

Since everyone loves to laugh, funny stories appeal to readers of all ages, and books that are part of a series will keep those readers coming back for more. As adults and young children bond while sharing books, laughing together makes this experience especially fun and memorable, and will likely result in requests for more reading. Here are some picture book series that are sure to inspire giggles from children and the adults reading to them. *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt is the first book in a comical series about a boy who opens his crayon box only to find a list of demands he must deliver in order for his crayons to return. In *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein, a little red chicken hilariously interjects herself into the story her papa is attempting to read. Jon Klassen's *Hat* trilogy of hat-related capers offers visual and tongue-in-cheek humor, while letting the reader in on every joke. *Those Darn Squirrels!* by Adam Rubin tells the story of some clever squirrels whose mischievous antics are received with much chagrin by grumpy Old Man Fookwire.

Funny stories can make the transition to independent reading easier and more pleasurable. As children begin to read on their own, laughing while doing so helps them build confidence and want to continue. Fans of the Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie* books may enjoy some other beginner chapter series. *Fly Guy* by Tedd Arnold tells the hilarious adventures of a boy and his pet fly. The *Giggle Gang* series by Jan Thomas is filled with silly characters and wacky humor. In *Mercy Watson* by Kate DiCamillo, a lovable pig incites chaos with her many shenanigans. Jokes abound in *Narwhal and Jelly* by Ben Clanton, a graphic novel series for younger readers, about the budding friendship between a narwhal and jellyfish while on their many escapades.

Finding just the right books that will inspire a love of reading is very important as children continue their independent reading. Funny early chapter books can motivate even the most hesitant readers. *The Bad Guys* by Aaron Blabey offers plenty of wit and slapstick humor as Mr. Wolf tries to convince the reader that he is really not a bad guy, and encourages his friends like Mr. Snake and Mr. Shark to join the Good Guys Club. In the *Dory Fantasmagory* series by Abby Hanlon, an irresistible rascal with a big imagination constantly seeks the attention of her older siblings. *The Princess In Black* series by Shannon and Dean Hale is filled with clever humor and action as Princess Magnolia ditches her fancy clothes when trouble arises, becoming her alter-ego, the Princess in Black. *Shivers!: The Pirate Who's Afraid of Everything* by Annabeth Bondor-Stone and Connor White is the series opener about a young pirate who is so afraid of the sea that he stays in a parked ship as his family sails on important missions.

When he learns of their capture, his courageous adventure along with his best friend and pet fish begins, and many laughs ensue. The fourth book will be out in April, 2020. Middle-grade readers often get hooked on funny series, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the next title. The best ones tell great stories while exploring relevant themes of friendship, acceptance, loyalty, and courage. *The Last Kids On Earth* by Max Brallier is a post-apocalyptic adventure series with lots of thrills and laughs as protagonist Jack Sullivan builds a team of friends to help slay the monster, Blarg. Another good choice for fans of adventure and comedy is *Treasure Hunters* by James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein. This high seas adventure series begins with the Kidd siblings trying to unravel the mystery of their missing parents. The seventh book will be out in June, 2020. *The Tapper Twins* series by Geoff Rodkey is a very modern comedy about twelve-year-old brother and sister twins who are opposite in every way except in their desire to out prank each other. The hilarious stories are told through recordings, text messages, photos, and screenshots. Another series about rival pranksters, *The Terrible Two* by Mac Barnett and Jory John gets very interesting when these two decide to join forces, creating perfect comic harmony. The *Treehouse* series by Andy Griffiths is an imaginative tale of friends, Andy and Terry, writers who live in a treehouse, complete with a bowling alley and underground lab. A string of wacky events threatens their book's completion by the deadline. *Welcome To Wonderland* by Chris Grabenstein is narrated by eleven-year-old P.T. Wilkie, as he chronicles all of the zany things that happen while living in his family's motel.

There are plenty of humorous series for middle-grade graphic novel fans. *Big Nate* by Lincoln Peirce will have readers laughing along as trouble seems to find middle-schooler Nate Wright, who is dealing with a bossy sister, crazy classmates, and dreaded pop quizzes. *Comics Squad* is a bust-your-gut laughing anthology series, with contributions from the most beloved names in the genre. Each book contains action packed stories about kids' favorite topics. *Dog Man* by Dav Pilkey is about a part-canine and part-human creation and all of the silliness that ensues from the conflicting feelings of both. *Lucy & Andy Neanderthal* by Jeffrey Brown is a historical comedy about the lives of brother and sister cave kids. *Lunch Lady* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka is full of surprises and laughs as a sleuthing lunch lady battles enemies with super-gadget kitchen tools.

Please visit or call the Rizzo Children's Library at 201-891-4866, x3 for suggestions on finding great reads for children of all ages, and ask about joining one of our book clubs for children in grades 1-5.

This article was published in Wyckoff Living.